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POLITICS

Michigan election officials slam report on votes in Antrim County



Craig Mauger
The Detroit News

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Lansing — Michigan's top election officials denounced Monday a 23-page report on voting technology in rural Antrim County, which has become a hot spot for conspiracies trying to discredit President-elect Joe Biden's victory nationally.

On Monday morning, Circuit Court Judge Kevin Elsenheimer allowed supporters of President Donald Trump to publicly release and discuss information they've collected through a forensic analysis of tabulators and data in the 23,000-person Northern Michigan county.

The information, which was gathered as part of a legal fight there, had previously been under protective order, meaning it couldn't be publicly released.

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Attorney General Dana Nessel issued a joint statement calling the report "another in a long stream of misguided, vague and dubious assertions designed to erode public confidence in the November presidential election."



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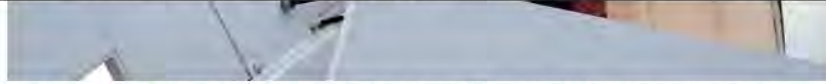


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Antrim County, which is reliably Republican, has been in the spotlight because its initial results on election night showed Biden ahead of Trump by thousands of votes. Election officials later determined there were problems in the reporting of the results, and Trump ended up winning the county by more than 3,700 votes.

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"If the Trump campaign had any actual evidence of wrongdoing – or genuine suspicion thereof – they could have requested a hand recount of every ballot in the state," Benson said in a Monday statement. "They did not, instead choosing to allow shadowy organizations claiming expertise to throw around baseless claims of fraud in an effort to mislead American voters and undermine the integrity of the election."

But Trump, who lost Michigan by 154,000 votes, tweeted that the report showed "massive fraud." The report came from an organization called Allied Security Operations Group, which has previously made false claims about Michigan's election.

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The group previously claimed there were six precincts with more than 120% turnout in the

The group previously claimed there were six precincts with more than 120% turnout in the state's election. But its data was incorrect, according to publicly available turnout numbers.

The new report alleges that Dominion Voting Systems, the election technology used by Antrim County and elsewhere, "is intentionally and purposefully designed with inherent errors to create systemic fraud and influence election results." It's unclear how Allied Security Operations Group (ASOG) reached this conclusion, however.

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Likewise, the report, authored by Russell James Ramsland, Jr., who is part of ASOG's management team, says the group found an "error rate" of 68% when examining "the tabulation log" of the server for Antrim County. It's also unclear what the "error rate" data refers to specifically and how it impacts the results.

"The results of the Antrim County 2020 election are not certifiable," Ramsland wrote. "This is a result of machine and/or software error, not human error."

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In one section, the report referenced a 2004 referendum vote in Venezuela, saying the findings in Antrim County reflected the same tactics to "manipulate" votes.

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Guy, a Republican, said she was saddened by the efforts to discredit the equipment.

"I did read the report and find that there are many misleading statements that are simply not accurate," Guy said.

Dominion said in a statement that there were no software glitches in Antrim County or anywhere else. The problems in the county were "isolated human errors not involving Dominion." Officials failed to update the programming in their tabulators after requiring changes to their ballot, the company said.

The clerk's staff in Antrim County did not update the media drives for all of the tabulators in the county, so some tabulators did not communicate properly with the county's central election management system software, according to the Michigan Secretary of State's Office.

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After discovering the error in reporting the unofficial results, the clerk's office worked to report correct unofficial results by reviewing the printed totals tape on each tabulator and hand-entering the results for each race, for each precinct in the county, the secretary of state's office previously said.

In a signed statement filed in court, Brater said the report makes a "series of unsupported conclusions" and "ascribes motives of fraud and obfuscation to processes that are easily explained as routine election procedures or error corrections."

Michigan uses hand-marked paper ballots, Brater noted. The Michigan Bureau of Elections and Antrim County will conduct a hand tally of all ballots cast in the presidential election there, he said.

The report was spurred through a lawsuit brought by Antrim County resident William Bailey. Elsenheimer, the judge and a former Republican lawmaker, allowed Allied



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brought by Antrim County resident William Bailey. Elsenheimer, the judge and a former Republican lawmaker, allowed Allied Security Operations Group and Bailey to take forensic images of the county's 22 tabulators and review other election-related material.



Jonathan Brater Paul Morigi

In recent days, Bailey's attorney, Matthew DePerno, pushed to have the information they found released publicly.

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"Documents filed with the court and documents being used within this litigation should be public record," contended DePerno during a court hearing Monday morning.

But Erik Grill, an assistant attorney general representing Benson in the case, warned that the analysis is "inaccurate, incomplete and misleading."

"There's no reason to hide," Grill said during a virtual court hearing Monday morning. "There is nothing to hide."

On Sunday, attorneys representing six Michigan Republicans who are challenging the state's election results asked the U.S. Supreme Court to allow them to file new evidence under seal — meaning it's not released to the public — including a "forensic examination" of voting machines in Antrim County, according to a letter obtained by The Detroit News.

"This evidence is crucial to a just resolution of the cases pending before this court," the Michigan Republicans' attorneys wrote to the U.S. Supreme Court. "The petitioners stand ready to provide the evidence to the court under the procedures it deems appropriate."

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Biden won Michigan by 154,000 votes in results that were certified Nov. 23 by the Board of State Canvassers. The Michigan Secretary of State's Office has previously warned "voters to be wary of the claims" related to the Antrim County examination.

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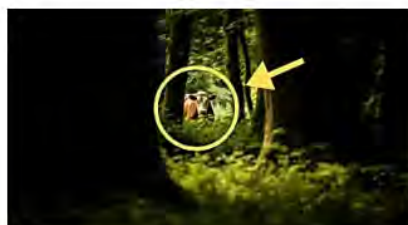
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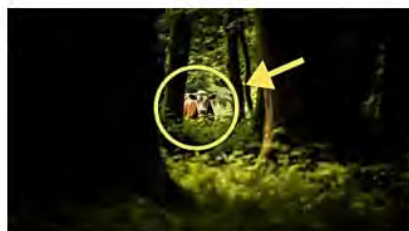
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